

REVIEW OF THE ED.D. IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 13.0301
Curriculum and Instruction

OVERVIEW

The Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning program at Illinois State University is housed in the School of Teaching and Learning within the College of Education. The School of Teaching and Learning awards degrees in the following programs: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Middle Level Education. A teacher candidate is able to earn additional endorsements on their professional education license. Early Childhood candidates may earn the following endorsements: reading teacher and/or English as a second language (ESL). Early Childhood teacher candidates may earn the following endorsements: bilingual, reading teacher, and/or English as a second language (ESL). Middle level candidates must choose two of the following endorsements for their plans of study: language arts, math, science, social science, or English as a second language (ESL). In addition to the above-mentioned endorsements, Early Childhood candidates may pursue a Special Educator Letter of Approval that is highly desired by Illinois districts, and they may also pursue a minor in bilingual education. The School of Teaching and Learning provides a professional educator sequence for many secondary education programs. Finally, the School offers graduate programs which include: a Master's in Teaching and Learning, a Master's in Reading, and an Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning. The School also offers a post-baccalaureate program for the Library Information Specialist endorsement. The last review of the Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning program occurred in 2012-2013.

The Doctorate in Teaching and Learning program prepares candidates for a variety of leadership positions, such as school curriculum specialist, community and four-year college and university teacher educator, academic administrator, and instructional specialist. Work in the Ed.D. program includes training in responsible leadership and in curriculum design, instruction and assessment, as well as analysis of contemporary issues in education.

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred by Plan of Study, Fall Census Day, 2012-2019 Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Enrollments, fall census day	40	44	35	58	35	45	44	30
Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year	10	6	6	7	6	8	7	12

Table notes:

Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2018 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

The Teaching and Learning Doctoral program standards are as follows:

- *Research and Scholarship.* Candidates systematically examine trends, issues, theories, and/or policies that have or will impact teacher education. Candidates engage in written and verbal interaction to expand the knowledge based related to teacher education and/or curriculum and instruction. This interaction includes: critically interpreting scholarly works; designing research methodology and collecting data; analyzing and synthesizing research; and understanding research integrity and responsibility. Candidates demonstrate ability to work both individually and with others, contributing to a learning community through shared problem solving and decision making.

- *Curriculum & Instruction.* Candidates critically examine and evaluate curriculum & instruction foundations, principals of design and theory, and methodology related to the following: socio-cultural, historical, and political frameworks; applying technology consistently with diverse pedagogies; analyzing and understanding diverse assessment strategies in the evaluation of teaching; and designing and evaluating curricula and instructional strategies.
- *Diversity.* Candidates identify, comprehend, and analyze issues of diversity and equity in P-12 and higher education through processes which include but are not limited to the following: critiquing bias and underrepresentation in literature; investigating traditionally underserved and/or marginalized students and communities; and applying nontraditional understandings of diversity to scholarship, teaching and community.

Students learning outcomes

The program has developed standards for student success in three areas: research and scholarship, curriculum and instruction, and diversity. Detailed measures within each of these areas have been designed to assess student performance.

Program curriculum (2018-2019)

The Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning requires 66 credit hours. This includes 15 credit hours of core courses, 6 credit hours of educational foundations courses, 15 credit hours from an area of concentration, 3 credit hours of practicum, 12 credit hours of research methods, 15 credit hours of dissertation research and a doctoral examination.

Program delivery

The program is offered on the Normal campus.

The program is delivered primarily through face-to-face or blended face-to-face/online instruction.

Department faculty (Fall 2019)

42 tenure track faculty members (12 Professors, 16 Associate Professors, and 14 Assistant Professors)

75 non-tenure track faculty members (12 full-time, 63 part-time, totaling 35.50 FTE)

Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 22 to 1

Undergraduate student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 40 to 1

Specialized accreditation

There is currently no accreditation or external approval for this program. Previously, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) served as an accreditor of this program. However, as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) has taken on the role of accreditation for teacher education this program no longer falls under their auspice as it does not lead to initial or advanced teacher certification.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

The program reported that there have been no major changes in external factors that affect this academic program.

Responses to previous program review recommendations

The 2012-2013 program review resulted in five recommendations.

1. *Continue to work with University Assessment Service to further improve the program assessment plan through enhanced stakeholder input.* This is an area that the program review process has highlighted as a remaining need. At the time of the last review NCATE (now CAEP) served as the accrediting body of this program and the assessment plan was designed to provide the data that was required of NCATE/CAEP. However, they no longer serve as the accrediting body of this program and the School of Teaching and Learning's Graduate Committee feels they would be better served by revising their assessment plans to meet their needs and focuses on the individualized nature of a doctoral program. For example, the department faculty see a need for assessments that focus on the outcomes of the comprehensive exam, the dissertation process, and time to degree

rather than the content of the dissertation and individual class assignments. The program faculty also still need to enhance stakeholder input. To this end, the faculty have designed a survey that to send annually to all recent graduates.

2. *Monitor the advisement process for its support to students and its impact on time-to-completion; modify the process as necessary.* Since the previous review the department has utilized an advisement system in which all new students are provided with an initial advisor. As the students take courses and meet additional faculty, they can choose at any time to declare a permanent advisor, which often becomes their dissertation chairperson. When this system was first established, the initial advisor was selected from the entire graduate faculty. However, in the past several years, the department has shifted this process so that the initial advisor is appointed from the membership of the School's Graduate Committee. The faculty felt this would better inform the members of the Graduate Committee about issues that doctoral students were having as they entered the program. The majority of alumni and current students that responded to the survey that were provided with an initial advisor stated that they met with the advisor to plan courses, discuss professional practice options, and research ideas. It has also become a greater part of the School culture for faculty members to visit TCH 501 (Introduction to Doctoral Studies) to introduce themselves and their research agendas. In the past several years, more than half of the School's faculty visited the course and met the new doctoral students. This allows for students to meet faculty that they may not have courses with but have similar research interests.
3. *Revisit the purpose and format of the comprehensive exam.* The comprehensive exam underwent some revision and the process was reexamined by the Graduate Committee and the entire faculty. The exam now has a more standardized format with a focus on a balance of course content and preparation for the dissertation. The standard exam has two questions based on the content area that the student is planning to pursue in their dissertation. The first question is formatted as a literature review and the second focused on research methodology. The specific questions are now developed and assessed by the student's proposed dissertation committee. The committee and the student then have a better understanding of the foundational aspects of the dissertation that the student is considering, and the feedback provided by the committee can help form the dissertation proposal.
4. *Revisit program admission requirements with the intention of strengthening them and making them more applicable to the program.* This has been a major topic of discussion over the past few years in the Graduate Committee and it was again this year during the program review conversations. The admission requirements that received the most discussion were the 3 years of teaching and the GRE. The committee believes that the program is best designed for a K-12 teacher that has a master's degree and teaching experience. However, a number of students in the program do not meet that description. For example, the department has worked with the School of Communication to allow students in the Ed.D. program to focus their Area of Concentration in COM, which has brought several students per year into the program over the last couple of years. These students have been an excellent addition to the program's courses and often have university teaching experiences rather than K-12 experience. The committee has also, at times, waived the K-12 teaching requirement for other college and university instructors that do not have previous degrees in education. The committee struggles with accepting enough students to keep the program open and making sure all of the requirements are met. The GRE requirement has also been a perennial discussion. The Graduate Committee states in the Doctoral Program Handbook that a combined GRE score of 298 is required for admissions. The average GRE score of admitted students was 304 in 2017 and 297 in 2016. So, it is clear that the Graduate Committee does not use the combine score of a 298 as a "cut score". The score is, however, taken into consideration along with the other application materials. The department faculty are aware that a number of universities and programs have moved away from GRE scores as admission requirements and the Graduate Committee read some of the research on GRE scores over the past year. The committee decided to keep the scores as a requirement and any student that scores under a 298 can write an additional statement, as described on the program's admissions page, to explain the lower than expected score.
5. *Enhance opportunities for faculty/student research and teaching collaboration.* The Ed.D. program has several opportunities for faculty/student research that include independent studies and professional practice courses. In those experiences, students often collaborate with faculty members on research activities. The School of Teaching and Learning also developed a graduate student travel grant to provide funding for graduate students to present their research at conferences. In terms of teaching collaboration, the department has several GA positions that full-time doctoral students can apply for that include undergraduate teaching. It is also typical for 1-2 doctoral students to serve as non-tenure track faculty, when they are not eligible to be Graduate Assistants. Several students have also completed professional practice courses in which they co-taught a course with a faculty member.

Major findings

Based on the program self-study, the program faculty are pleased with the Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning program. Program alumni and current students seem to be pleased with the program and their experiences in the School of Teaching and Learning. Nearly all of the students and alumni that responded to the survey answered that they would recommend the program to a colleague. There are several components of the program that seem to be working well. The faculty believe that the initial advising system, the core courses, and the comprehensive exam process are points of pride for the program. Students in the program seem to be receiving positive initial advising that enables them to get started in the program and allows them time before finding a dissertation chairperson. The department faculty believe that the core courses are providing a good foundation on which the area of concentration courses can be build. That being said, there are several changes that faculty feel are important to make in the core classes that would allow us to include the growing area of educational technology to the core, refocus a class on the larger topic of educational assessment rather than just teacher assessment, and offer a doctoral level learning theory course. The faculty believe that the changes that have been made to the comprehensive exam process now provides for an exam that both allows the student to utilize their previous coursework and prepares them to focus on their dissertation. The faculty feel that students are, in large part, prepared for the exam through their coursework and that the exam is a positive learning experience for the students.

While the program faculty are proud of the program, there are some areas for improvement. As described above, there are changes to the core curriculum that the faculty believe will provide for a better foundation. In addition to the core courses, faculty feel that a more sequenced set of research courses would also be beneficial for students. In the curriculum that the program faculty are a course has been proposed that will help prepare students to be scholarly writers and a course that focuses on conceptual frameworks in educational research. The faculty believe these additional courses will help to provide a more holistic set of research courses. The faculty also believe that it would be beneficial for the program and for school faculty for the program to grow and support more full-time graduate students in graduate assistant positions that include more compensation.

One question that the program faculty are left with from the program review is whether the program best identifies as an Ed.D. program or if the department should explore changing the program to a Ph.D. program. The faculty found that the vast majority of alumni that responded to the survey take jobs in higher education and with an increased focus on research in the proposed curriculum changes the faculty wonder if the program is more aligned with a Ph.D. program which may better serve students that look for higher education positions.

Initiatives and plans

The main actions that the program faculty intend to take in the next program review cycle are to:

- Implement and review the curriculum changes that have been planned.
- Revise the assessment plan to generate data that are more useful for program review.
- Plan and implement recruitment strategies to increase the size of the program and to offer increased compensation for full time graduate assistants.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome: The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the program for a concise and critical self-study report. The Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning is designed to prepare practitioners for teacher education leadership roles as school curriculum specialists, teacher educators, academic administrators, and instructional specialists. Program demand is largely driven by full-time practicing teachers or college/university personnel who intend to become leaders in their institutions or in their specific area of expertise. Most students come from the surrounding geographic area, but there has been demand from distant school districts for which previous cohorts have been arranged in some years.

The committee commends the program for their success in maintaining their enrollments and supports their desire for increasing it. The committee encourages the program faculty to examine ways to increase enrollments through broadened marketing efforts, the development of cohorts, and examining whether the development of a Ph.D. program could help with these efforts. The committee also suggests that the program faculty examine how some of their comparator institutions have been able to increase their enrollments. The committee commends the program on its ability to maintain small enrollments in their courses to ensure the quality of students' experiences. Additionally, time to degree statistics suggest that most of the students are completing the program within a timely matter and have been successful with their post-graduation employment.

The committee notes the curricular work that the program faculty have initiated to support student scholarship. The committee commends the program faculty's efforts to substantially revise the program curriculum to offer additional courses, including several that focus on research. We recognize the positive impact of increased faculty participation in an early course that students complete (TCH 501) to introduce them to the diversity of scholarly opportunities within the program. The committee applauds the program efforts to support graduate student travel for presenting their scholarly work. The committee suggests that the program faculty develop further opportunities for their students to present their scholarly activities and to continue to pursue efficient ways to track these scholarly accomplishments. Furthermore, we commend the infusion of the topics of diversity and inclusiveness within the curriculum.

The committee commends faculty members of the program for their contributions to the Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning program. All tenure track faculty members in the School of Teaching and Learning are members of the graduate faculty. Accordingly, all tenure track faculty members teach graduate courses, supervise and advise graduate students, and serve on thesis/dissertation committees. Faculty members are active researchers who publish in nationally and internationally peer-reviewed journals.

Follow-up Reports.

Assessment Plan. The Academic Planning Committee recognizes faculty efforts in developing an assessment plan that aligns with the program's previous accreditation standards. However, the program faculty report that the assessment plan has not been revised since the previous program review cycle and needs to be updated. The committee asks that the program work with University Assessment Services to revise the existing plan so that it provides meaningful data for faculty to use for program revisions. The committee also asks the faculty to implement the revised plan by collecting and analyzing data, utilizing findings to inform programmatic decisions, and documenting decisions made and the rationale for them. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2021. We also ask that the faculty submit a report to the Office of the Provost regarding implementation of the plan and any action plans that have resulted from the data collected by May 1, 2022.

Comparator and Aspirational Programs. The committee has included a request for analyses of comparator and aspirational institutions in the self-study report guidelines to provide faculty with opportunities to consider the niche their program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning and improvement. The committee asks the program to revisit these two sections of the self-study, with a focus on broadening the scope of the selection of aspirational programs beyond that of the identified comparators. In a subsequent follow-up report, the committee recommends the faculty address this section through analyses of aspirational programs selected nationally along with a discussion of how these analyses have informed the strategic direction of the program. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of aspirational institutions and to summarize findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2021.

Recommendations.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty members of the Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning program for the opportunity to provide input regarding advanced educator preparation at Illinois State University through consideration of the submitted self-study report submitted by faculty. The following committee recommendations from the committee that should be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with faculty members. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2027, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Develop a plan for recruitment and enrollment growth. The committee supports faculty efforts to explore further expansion of program enrollment to levels closer to their comparator programs during the next program review cycle. The committee encourages the program to develop and implement a plan for student recruitment and retention, including in the plan strategies for increasing enrollment of students from racial and ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented in the program and discipline. Some elements of a recruitment plan have already been identified by faculty in its self-study report, including advertising at state-level teacher conferences, continuing to work with school districts to develop cohorts, exploring hybrid models of delivery, and discovering potentials for increasing compensation for full time graduate assistants and scholarship options. The committee encourages the program faculty to examine whether the development of a Ph.D. program could help with these efforts. The committee recommends that the program work with the Graduate School and University Marketing and Communications to pursue additional methods of recruiting.

Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. As indicated in the self-study, the committee encourages the program to pursue its goals related to further developing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Develop a plan for alumni tracking and engagement. The committee concurs with faculty in its plan to design and implement a system for tracking program alumni and then using the system to enhance alumni networking. The alumni survey is a good start but developing a broader plan may further strengthen alumni relations through more frequent surveys, an alumni advisory board, newsletters and other web-based information, and special events such as online alumni seminars and research symposia. These activities may become even more important in the years ahead as the program alumni become more diverse. The program could benefit from increased involvement of its alumni in providing input regarding the program and in mentoring students. Additionally, such a tracking system could be used to better monitor the types of job placements and job placement rates of program graduates.

Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan. After the program has revised its existing plan, the committee encourages faculty to continue its implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary.